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AmeriCorps*VISTA Progress Report

Legal Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Project Name: Wisconsin DPI VISTA Project

Address: 125 South Webster P.O.Box 7841

Project Director: Jane L. Grinde

City/State/Zip: Madison WI 53707-7841

Telephone: 608 266 9356

Fax: (608) 266-2529

Email: jane.grinde@dpi.state.wi.us

Grant Number: 06VSNWI009

Period Covered by this Report:

From: 10/01/2009 **to** 12/31/2009

Data Updates

# of VISTA Members on board at end of reporting period	20
# of Community Volunteers serving who are Baby Boomers	80
Dollar value of cash resources developed by VISTA Members	10116
# of Service Hours performed by Community Volunteers	1162
Dollar value of non-cash resources developed by VISTA Members	11781
# of VISTA Members supported by cost share	0
# of Community Volunteers serving	301

Member and Sponsor Development

	Americorps *VISTA Members	Supervisors	CNCS Funded	Funded by Other Source	Comments
On-Site Orientation	3	2	Y	Y	
Community Outreach	20	10	Y	N	
Community Volunteer Generation/Recruitment	20	0	Y	N	
Effective Volunteer Management	20	0	Y	N	
Resource Mapping	2	2	Y	N	
Resource Development/Fundraising	20	20	N	N	
Grant Writing	20	20	Y	N	
Organizational Development	10	16	Y	N	
Performance Measures	20	20	Y	N	
Tracking Systems	5	3	Y	N	
Information Technology	20	20	Y	N	
Developing On-Site Orientations and Training Plans	0	2	Y	N	
Other (Please Specify)	20	12	N	Y	Poverty Matters Conference, Appleton WEASSP Conference, Lake Geneva Milwaukee Action Team Training

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Project Plan

Service Category: Other Education

Performance Milestone

Milestone

All sites establish Action Teams for Partnerships to facilitate family involvement at the site.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

September 2009-December 2009

Actual Period of Accomplishment

December 2009

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

Action Teams for Partnerships are established and members recruited.

Target # (number) or % (percent)

100 %

Actual # or % to date

100 %

How Measured

Sign-in sheet

Description of Data Collection

Membership lists will be submitted with bi-weekly and quarterly reports, which includes at least 1 administrator, 2 parents, 2 teachers, and 2 others.

Progress this Reporting Period

All July and August start VISTAs are working with Action Teams to facilitate family partnerships. These teams include parents, teachers, community members and often students. Action Team establishment is key to sustainability and the key to improving student achievement in schools and districts. Our VISTAs have all approached this task differently and while sites might call this team their "Parent-Teacher-Council" or sometimes their "Family Support Team" they are all working to open the lines of communication between families and parents. Most notably, Angela Rumsey and Casey Burns in Milwaukee helped to organize training in the Action Team process for almost 200 schools. These schools are now trained to begin implementing research-based partnerships that link family involvement to student learning.

Performance Milestone

Milestone

VISTAs map community assets and collect data on their site's climate to connect partnership work among all stakeholders.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-October 2009

Actual Period of Accomplishment

December 2009

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

% of VISTAs who submit community asset maps to DPI.

Target # (number) or % (percent)

100 %

Actual # or % to date

100 %

How Measured

Community Partner Survey

Description of Data Collection

community asset mapping will be completed by all VISTAs using tools distributed at Orientation. Results of mapping will be submitted with Quarterly Reports.

Progress this Reporting Period

All VISTAs have completed their asset maps, including our VISTAs who began their service in November. VISTAs

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report using these maps daily to connect with community resources and help organize their partnership efforts. Training is provided to all VISTAs on asset mapping at Orientation and follow up support is given throughout the year. Our goal is to encourage VISTAs to focus on the assets in their communities, not the problems, so that they can build on the successes.

Performance Milestone

Milestone

VISTAs will research, write, and submit grants to sustain programs beyond their service year.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-August 2010

Actual Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-August 2010

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

Number of grants submitted.

Target # (number) or % (percent)

20 #

Actual # or % to date

11 #

How Measured

Sustainability Checklist

Description of Data Collection

Pre/post surveys, bi-weekly and quarterly reports, and community asset map will also be used. Twenty grants will have been written and submitted by VISTAs in our project. This is roughly one grant per VISTA.

Progress this Reporting Period

Several VISTAs wrote grants this semester to help develop programming and increase capacity at their sites. Eight different grants were submitted, in addition to general grant research that almost all VISTAs completed. Stephanie Dorman submitted several community garden grants for the West Allis/West Milwaukee School District and Erica Spurgeon wrote 2 grants to various foundations in the Green Bay area to help support the Phuture Phoenix program at UW-GB and the Green Bay School District. Anna Morgen and Casey Gauthier in Rhinelander received a \$500 Kohls grant to help support partnership programming. This grant also enabled the VISTAs to place Kohls volunteers in their district to conduct community service.

Performance Milestone

Milestone

Sites will implement family-school-community practices that help families make a connection to their children's learning.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-August 2010

Actual Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-August 2010

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

Number of activities/practices implemented.

Target # (number) or % (percent)

120 #

Actual # or % to date

65 #

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How Measured

Activity log

Description of Data Collection

Action Plans and agendas of activities, as well as project descriptions, will be submitted by the VISTAs in bi-weekly and quarterly reports. Each VISTA will coordinate at least six family-school-community events or initiatives throughout the year.

Progress this Reporting Period

VISTAs are moving forward in conducting family partnership activities; these range from creating newsletters, to organizing family nights, to offering parent workshops, to recruiting and training volunteers. In particular, Sylvia Sedrak, serving with the Wausau Early Childhood program, was able to implement fatherhood related activities, including a "Dad and Me Wii" night, where fathers could engage in playtime with their young children and gather resources on the importance of play. Additionally, Tracy Steffens in Oshkosh has partnered with the French Club at the high school to bring language programming to students and families as part of the after school program. Parents are so thrilled with this opportunity that they are working with Tracy to partner with other language clubs in the area; including Spanish and German.

Finally, Brittany Williams with the Madison WEOP office hosted a very successful "Telling Our Stories" workshop where families and students connected meaningfully around sharing their backgrounds, their values, and their customs. This workshop was designed for families to get to know each other, build a level of trust, and start working together to improve the program. The workshop helped to bring families together from different cultures, specifically Latino and Hmong families.

Performance Milestone

Milestone

Sites will have an identified process for partnerships that includes the Action Team for Partnerships.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

July 2010

Actual Period of Accomplishment

July 2010

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

Percent of Action Teams that have started work on next year action plan.

Target # (number) or % (percent)

100 %

Actual # or % to date

0 %

How Measured

NA

Description of Data Collection

VISTAs will ensure that Year-end UPDATE surveys and Action Plans are submitted to DPI.

Progress this Reporting Period

UPDATE Surveys are due at the end of June; data will be collected by DPI and reported with the July 30 Progress Report. Each site is required to submit an UPDATE form to renew their membership in NNPS and to remain a host site with the VISTA project.

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Performance Milestone

Milestone

More families and community members will feel welcome in their children's school, have an understanding of the importance of being involved in their children's learning, and know how to participate to help their children.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

October 2009 and July 2010

Actual Period of Accomplishment

July 2010

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

Increase in the percent of families indicating positive attitudes on end of year survey

Target # (number) or % (percent)

20 %

Actual # or % to date

0 %

How Measured

Pre/Post test

Description of Data Collection

VISTAs will survey at least 25 parents at the beginning of the school year to determine base-line data and survey 25 parents again at the end of the school year to determine progress. At least 20% more parents will indicate a positive increase.

Progress this Reporting Period

Baseline data has been collected. We will be able to analyze progress and increase in positive attitudes among parents by the end of the school year and by the July 30th Progress Report. All VISTAs will be required to survey parents at the end of the school year.

The community need statement

From the research we know that when families are involved in their children's learning, students from all backgrounds, but especially low-income students, do better in school. They earn better grades, stay in school longer and go on to post-secondary education. We also know that the more parents can advocate for their children, the better their children do in school and the longer they stay in school (Epstein and Henderson, et. al.). VISTAs focus on schools identified for improvement (SIFI) under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. When students perform better in school and successful graduate from high school, increasing amounts of economic opportunity will be open to them. Additionally, because Wisconsin has been identified as having the largest achievement gap between students of color and their white peers, strong family partnerships is one way we can improve the educational experiences of all students and families.

Goal Statement

The goal of the DPI VISTA Project is to build capacity for family involvement in low-income schools and communities by implementing a research-based, sustainable process for partnerships.

Performance Milestone

Milestone

All VISTAs will coordinate family partnership activities that address the cultural and racial diversity of the site.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-August 2010

Actual Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-August 2010

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

Each VISTA will help facilitate at least ONE activity that provides opportunity for cultural exchange among families, students, staff, and community members at site.

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Target # (number) or % (percent)

20 #

How Measured

Activity log

Actual # or % to date

10 #

Description of Data Collection

Action Plans and agendas of activities, as well as project descriptions, will be submitted by the VISTAs in bi-weekly and quarterly reports.

Progress this Reporting Period

Several VISTAs have focused on addressing issues of racial and ethnic equity at their sites. Most notably Erica Spurgeon with the Green Bay School District facilitated an African American Family Night to engage families of color. This event was meant to help families network among each other and get to know school and program staff. This event was organized primarily because of the importance of engaging ALL families in partnership, but also the realization that African American participation at other family events had traditionally been low.

Becky Smith, serving Leopold Elementary School in Madison, organized a bilingual family literacy night that was conducted in two languages. Outreach was primarily focused on Latino families and resources, materials, and staff were available in English and Spanish. Feedback was very positive for this event and the Latino Family Support group that Becky works with is interested in organizing more events to reach out to non English speaking families in the district.

Performance Milestone

Milestone

VISTAs will solicit monetary and in kind donations to enable low income families to attend events and participate in partnership activities.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-August 2010

Actual Period of Accomplishment

August 2009-August 2010

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

Number of donations received.

Target # (number) or % (percent)

50 #

How Measured

NA

Actual # or % to date

50 #

Description of Data Collection

Each VISTA will receive at least two monetary or in kind donations throughout the course of the year. Bi weekly reports will be used to collect this information from each VISTA member.

Progress this Reporting Period

At the mid way point in many of our VISTAs' service years, they have already reached this goal; soliciting donations has been a strength of our VISTA members and in particular, Robyn Krimke in Milwaukee, Erica Spurgeon in Green Bay, Stephanie Dorman in West Allis and Nicole Stachurski in WI Rapids had secured donations for programs, events, meetings, and door prizes. Nicole was able to secure donations from Charter communications to provide free internet to low income families in the community. Erica, Robyn, and Stephanie

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procured gift cards and free food from area businesses and agencies to support Family Nights at their sites.
Donations total are listed in the data updates portion of this report.

Performance Milestone

Milestone

VISTAs will help sites in "meeting the challenges" of developing meaningful, reciprocal family partnerships.

Planned Period of Accomplishment

July 2010

Actual Period of Accomplishment

July 2010

Indicator/Evidence of Progress

At least 75% of our sites will indicate making at least "good progress" on meeting the partnership challenges at their sites.

Target # (number) or % (percent)

75 %

Actual # or % to date

0 %

How Measured

Survey

Description of Data Collection

Data will be collected from the NNPS UPDATE survey each site must submit by June 30th.

Progress this Reporting Period

This data has not yet been collected. Progress will be reported on the July 30th Progress Report.

Narratives

Partnership/Collaboration Development

Developing partnerships is the primary focus for all of our VISTAs. But as a project, we are always looking for ways to continue our partnership with other VISTA projects and other national service entities in our state. We also look for ways to encourage our VISTAs to partner together and collaborate on their work.

During this past quarter, we began collaboration with WI Campus Compact in organizing a joint training for February. This training will be open to all of the VISTAs and will be based on the National Issues Forum Process: <http://www.nifi.org>. It will allow VISTAs to engage around a policy issue and learn strategies for facilitating their own forum back in their communities. They will also be spending time developing action plans for advancing the use of deliberative dialogue. We plan to kick off this training with a networking session between both groups of VISTAs.

We have also deepened our partnership with Milwaukee area national service programs the the development and planning of a Milwaukee AmeriCorps Service Summit, to be held the day after Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Programs have representatives on the planning committee, spearheaded by our VISTA Leader Penny Bruskin, and we expect up to 100 attendees to meet, network, and exchange ideas. We hope to expand this regional summit to other others of the state.

As a project, we are continually encouraging our VISTAs to work together and most recently, we have formed an Editorial Board to work together on our monthly newsletter. This team of 2 Classic VISTAs, 1 Recovery VISTA and the VISTA Leaders has worked on the latest edition, to be distributed in February and has brainstormed new ideas and a new look for our newsletter. The team will continue to work together to publish a resource that is relevant and useful to ALL VISTAs. We are excited about this new leadership in our corps.

Resource Development

During the mid way point for many of our VISTA's service years, we have already met our goal for in kind and monetary donations. Despite the tough economy, VISTAs are soliciting donations and writing grants with great success.

Stephanie Dorman, VISTA in West Allis, secured over \$800 of in kind donations from local businesses to support family nights and other goals of the action team. Donations were also received from the Milwaukee Bucks and Admirals.

Sarah Glassman, VISTA with Parents Plus in Milwaukee, secured over 50 market baskets from Growing Power to give to families at Maple Tree Elementary School during the holiday season. These baskets contained food and other needed items.

Hannah Schulz, serving at the Indian Community School in Franklin, was able to procure over \$5,000 worth of in kind goods for a community raffle that benefited the Family Resource Center at the school.

Finally, Sylvia Sedrak was able to receive almost \$3,000 worth of in kind donations for family events with the Wausau Pre K program due to the generosity of Home Depot and Noodles Restaurant.

Sustainability

Sustainability is an ongoing training topic with all of our VISTAs and Supervisors. As mentioned, we have facilitated a webinar on this topic for all members. It will also be the focus of our bi-monthly teleconference with supervisors in February.

Additionally, we maintain the section in our bi-weekly and quarterly reporting forms that ask how VISTAs are addressing sustainability on an ongoing basis. This has allowed us to monitor the kinds of challenges and successes VISTAs are having with sustaining their work. VISTAs are addressing this through recruiting volunteers, establishing action teams/advisory boards, and writing grants, primarily. Many are also working to connect with other community groups with similar purposes and vision. This has been a successful strategy. For instance, VISTAs are encouraged to work closely with PTAs, PTOs and PTCs at their sites in order to develop buy-in and build capacity for family partnerships.

Finally, we feel that in terms of sustainability of the project, the approval to hire a Project Coordinator project position at DPI has been a step forward! This position will be shared with the Learn and Serve program but will allow for one FTE for up to three years.

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Narratives

Multi-Site Performance

In order for us to acknowledge VISTAs' success and reinforce it, we need effective tools of assessment and communication.

We communicate with the VISTA members in the following ways:

- Bi-Weekly Reports
- Quarterly Reports
- Written feedback on all reports
- VISTA Blog
- DPI VISTA Project Google Site
- Monthly Teleconferences/Webinars
- VISTA Project List-serv
- Monthly Newsletters
- Check-in phone calls/emails from Project Coordinator and VISTA Leaders every two weeks
- Site Visits

We communicate with the VISTA Supervisors in the following ways:

- Bi-Weekly Reports
- Quarterly Reports
- Written feedback on all reports
- DPI VISTA Project Google Site
- Bi-monthly Teleconferences
- VISTA Project List-serv
- Monthly Newsletters (featuring a Supervisor Segment)
- Check-in phone calls/emails from Project Coordinator
- Site Visits

Other Accomplishments

During this quarter, we were able to launch a state wide VISTA list serv. This enabled VISTA members from across the state and in several projects to connect, share resources, and post announcements and events. We have added all VISTAs, project staff, and many supervisors. DPI is hosting the list and our Project Coordinator and VISTA Leader are helping to maintain it.

Additionally, during this quarter we were able to expand the Action Team model that all of our VISTAs implement to all schools in the Milwaukee Public school system. At a training that two of our VISTAs help to organize along with Title I staff, almost 200 schools were trained in the partnership model. This training was also critical to help advance the work of our VISTA project in Milwaukee.

Finally, our VISTA Leader, Penny Bruskin is working with Milwaukee area national service groups to organize a Summit to bring all service agencies together to find ways to connect and work better together. Penny has connected with other projects in the Milwaukee area to help organize and implement the summit. It will be a networking summit with the opportunity to reflect on the challenges and successes that each member faces during his or her service.

Stories

VISTA: Brittany Williams
Site: WI Educational Opportunity Program -- WEOP (Madison, WI)

Brittany Williams has helped put together a Parent Advisory Board for community members and parents of students who are involved in WEOP's programs. The Advisory Board has decided to create committees within the larger board structure to give parents more input in decision making, which will effectively help them create their own programming for GEAR UP/EIP. Members of the Outreach Committee (an Advisory Board Committee) have also made efforts to increase sustainability by organizing a recruitment table at East High School's College and Careers Night in November.

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VISTA: Nicole Stachurski

Site: Grove Elementary School (Wisconsin Rapids, WI)

Nicole Stachurski was very successful in putting together the Grove Computer Distribution event in early October where local high school computer science students helped develop and run training sessions for families on computer programs and technology. Charter Communications also donated \$100 coupons to each family so that home internet set up could be more accessible for families. These resources are extremely vital in more rural communities where such access to internet and technology is not as common.

VISTA: Sarah Glassman

Site: Maple Tree Elementary (Milwaukee, WI)

Sarah Glassman has been helping facilitate a number of community partners to build capacity at Maple Tree Elementary School. She has spoken to representatives from Milwaukee Outreach Center, New Concepts Self-Development Center, Growing Power, West Granville Presbyterian Church, and an organization from Granville community members in an effort to build up Maple Tree's Action Team for Partnerships. Further partnerships with Northtown Church include setting up a mentoring program for Maple Tree students, which will be run by the church's youth group. In addition, Growing Power who has agreed to help set up a youth corps at the school. Growing Power has also donated 50 market baskets of local produce from their urban gardens.

VISTA: Becky Smith

Site: Madison Metropolitan School District (Madison, WI)

Becky Smith helped put together a bilingual Literacy Night this past December, "Books and a Blanket" "Libros y pijamas" in an effort to frame fun reading time at home as a great family activity. Along with providing family social/reading time and fun community guest readers, Becky was also able to offer each child a book to bring home. The following are some of the comments about the event:

"To All,

Thanks for planning and executing such a successful evening! I will be pleased to volunteer again in the spring." -Sue Tennent (Reading teacher)

"Thank you Becky, It was a very fun night! Looking forward to doing it again!"

-Lupita Montoto

Mid-West Family Broadcasting

La Movida Radio 1480AM

Account Executive and On Air Mid-Days Personality

Attachments and Links

Emailed to our Program Officer:

Compiled Quarterly Reports

VISTA Voice Newsletter by Tracy Steffens, Oshkosh

Donation Letter by Angela Rumsey, Milwaukee

MPS Cluster Newsletter template by Angela Rumsey, Milwaukee

Parent-Teacher Tip Sheet by Nicole Stachurski, WI Rapids

SUPAR Newsletter by Cara Slingerland, Milwaukee

Volunteer Brochure by Abby Churchill, Madison

Online:

October, November, and December newsletters (note particularly "VISTAs in the News" sections)

<http://dpi.wi.gov/fscpv/vnwsltrhm.html>

Narratives

Challenges

Our continuing ongoing challenge for this past quarter has been our work with Milwaukee Public Schools. We currently have six VISTAs members working with Parents Plus in Milwaukee and all six of them are working to support the advancement of family partnerships at the district level, while also supporting their individual school sites. Two VISTAs are working with the Parent Involvement Coordinator to focus specifically on parent outreach and professional development.

The partnership has continued to evolve over the past quarter and in many ways has strengthened. However, the correction action plan has presented new challenges in the way of supporting the work VISTAs are doing to nurture family partnership and how to make that support part of the culture of the district. However, with continual input from VISTAs and MPS staff we are moving forward to meet these challenges.

We are thrilled that the VISTAs are a part of district wide change, but we want to ensure that they are building capacity and sustainability for the district in a meaningful way.

The involvement of our Project Director, Project Coordinator, Parents Plus partners with the MPS DiFi plan has helped us maintain excellent communication with MPS staff and our VISTAs.

Recruitment

During this quarter, we successfully recruited two new VISTA members for our project and extended the service of three VISTA members until June, and renewed one VISTA member for a second year.

Our two new VISTAs are Casey Burns and Ellen Carpenter, serving with Milwaukee Public Schools and Madison School District respectively. Both of these individuals joined other VISTAs current serving at their sites, but both have quickly become leaders. The Project Coordinator and VISTA Leader, Penny Bruskin, provided orientation soon after their service began.

Three of our VISTAs extended their service until June: Robyn Krimke, Brittany Williams and Dustin Young. This extension was due to the work they are engaged in at their sites and we are thrilled to have them continue with our project.

One of our VISTAs, Nicole Stachurski, has renewed for a second year of service at Grove Elementary School in Wisconsin Rapids. Her work there has been outstanding as she is developing a system for sustained partnerships between families and school staff.

Training/Technical Assistance Needs

VISTAs expressed the following kinds of training and technical assistance during this quarter:

- Volunteer Management and Retention
- Life After VISTA/Using the Education Award
- Working with the Media
- Sustainability

We were able to offer a webinar on working with the media in the late Fall, which was co-facilitated by our VISTA Leader Casey Gauthier and a DPI VISTA Alum, now current Volunteer Coordinator for the Wausau School District, Roxane Hagedorn. This was an excellent training and allowed VISTAs to engage in conversation about the best ways to reach their local media contacts and the most important strategies for relaying their message. This webinar was recorded and is archived online for a full year, allowing other VISTAs to view it and continue to use it as a resource.

We have scheduled a webinar on Life After VISTA and plan to engage DPI VISTA Alums along with State Office staff and the Project Coordinator to discuss, among other things, job hunting, resume writing, using the education award, applying for non competitive eligibility, and applying to grad school. This will be the second year of this webinar and will offer current members the chance to ask questions, gain resources, and begin plans for their transition out of service.

At our last monthly webinar, our VISTA Leaders led the group in a discussion on sustainability, including a self-assessment activity. Providing technical assistance on sustainability is ongoing and something we address in every report and during every

Narratives

webinar. However, this dedicated time to focus on the topic was helpful to the members. This webinar has also been archived and can be accessed at any time.

Finally, we plan to schedule a Volunteer Management and Retention webinar for the second quarter for VISTAs to learn about the importance of training, supporting and retaining volunteers beyond the recruitment phase.

Ongoing technical assistance is provided regularly through reporting feedback and regular phone calls from the Project Coordinator and VISTA Leaders.